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175 but it would seem as though this original colonisation was little more than a feudal overlordship imposed by a small minority on the Lepcha population. After the internal revolution and Chinese wars in Tibet in the early seventeenth century three 'Red Hat' lamas fled to Sikkim, speedily converted the Lepchas and what other inhabitants there were, and created a Sikkimese Tibetan king; from this king the present Maharajah of Sikkim is indirectly descended. A subsequent legend puts back the conversion of Sikkim to lamaism some centuries earlier; it is said that one of the lamaist saints lived in the country and deposited sacred writings in various caves, where they were subsequently discovered.

From the time of the establishment of a Sikkimese kingdom the Lepchas became an 'inferior' subject race, under the domination of the Sikkimese Tibetans or Bhotias, to which race the Maharajah and the big landowners belonged. For a considerable period the Lepchas were debarred on account of their race from entering the lamaist monasteries, and, though this rule is now relaxed, it is questionable whether a Lepcha could today obtain an important position in the big monasteries outside the Lepcha reserve. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Lepchas fought with the Sikkimese against the continued invasions of the Nepali and Bhutanese; the country was then in a very uncertain state, and there was continuous slave-raiding; the memory of this is still kept lively by the threat which older people will make to a crying child that 'If you don't keep quiet a Tibetan (or Bhutanese) will come along with a big bag and take you away.' During the early nineteenth century a number of treaties were made between Sikkim and British India, broken, and re-made; finally in 1835 the Darjeeling district, naturally together with its inhabitants, was ceded by the Maharajah to the British in exchange for an annuity.

● 648 It can be seen that the Lepchas have been for a considerable period a subject race, under the domination of the Bhotias and English. They are agriculturists and hunters, but in Sikkim the best land has been taken by the Bhotias, and later by the Nepali who have immigrated into the country in great numbers; in Darjeeling much of the jungle and agricultural land has been turned into tea-estates, and the Lepchas have become workers on the

Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (edited by Filippo de Filippi. London. George Routledge. 1932). Writing in the early eighteenth century Desideri speaks of Sikkim (p. 118 and *passim*) as a province of Tibet, which had to pay tribute to Lhassa, and he makes no mention of its relatively recent conquest. He calls the province Brée-mé-jong, which means, 'the nice country.'

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tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not made the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

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declaration that they will not pass the frontiers of Tibet, Bhutan or Nepal; those who break this obligation are liable to imprisonment and punishment if caught.

As far as I can see the State of Sikkim is well and paternally administered; the extremely precipitous nature of the whole country has rendered road-building extremely difficult; but the main mule roads into Tibet are kept up in a good state, and solid bridges have been built on these roads. Sikkim has few natural resources except for some small copper mines in the south and (as far as I could tell, undeveloped) large quantities of mica-bearing stone in the north. Sikkim is strategically important as being on the main road between Tibet and India, and nearly all the trade between the two countries passes through it. The Political Officer, assisted by trade agents inside the Tibetan frontier, overlooks this traffic; he also advises the Maharajah on questions of policy.

Since the middle of the last century Sikkim has been free from war and the fear of war, and its history has been as uneventful and as happy as the poorness of the country allows. The only diversion of a military nature in which Sikkim has been involved was the Younghusband expedition to Lhassa in 1905–06 in which several Sikkimese and Lepchas took part. In recent years there has been so great an immigration of Nepalis into Sikkim that it is probable that in the southern part of the country these invaders outnumber the original inhabitants; laws have been passed prohibiting their settling to the north of certain fixed points, but it is not certain to what extent these laws are enforced.

The pacification of the whole country through the British protectorate has given the Lepchas general security; besides abolishing slave-raiding it has also put an end to the mild peonage which formerly existed among the Lepchas themselves. One day in Lingthem the lama Jiroong, when he was rather drunk, embarked on a widely applauded panegyric of the beneficial influence of the British, and of their confirmation in power of the Maharajah. Before the English came, he said, we Lepchas were harried by Tibetans and Nepali and could not settle anywhere for fear we should be sold as slaves; now we have our homes and can cultivate our crops.

Jiroong himself is the descendant of former slaves. Some generations ago his ancestor, then a small boy, was kidnapped by Bhutanese; but the boy was rescued by the then head of the village

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572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

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● 648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is

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sent to the Mandal, who then makes up his mind as to which boys are the most suitable and then goes through the formality of consulting the parents. This is really only a formality, for the Mandal will choose the most suitable boys, and there is usually a very limited choice. 648 ●

Datoop's eldest son, Pembu, spent nearly eleven years in Gangtok in the Maharajah's palace, first going there when he was a very little boy; he lived with a distant 'aunt'. He rose to be a footman and received quite good wages; he finally left owing to a dispute with his 'aunt' and 'uncle'. Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, when he was about fifteen, spent a year as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchen; at the end of that time he ran away because he was forced to kill chickens almost every day, and for one coming from such a pious family of lamas this sinful act was intolerably painful. He apparently showed some aptitude, for the cook tried to persuade him to stay so that he could take his place. When he first returned home Chudo exhibited a certain fussiness about cleanliness and such like follies, but he soon grew out of them. He made no attempt to introduce 'European style' cooking which he considered a complete waste of time. Both he and Pembu were married shortly after their return home and they have settled back completely into their society.

Such is not the case with Pichi, Datoop's second son, and Bahada, Ongden's second son, both of whom spent three years in the State carpentry school at Gangtok. They received their training and free board and lodging; in repayment they have to hold themselves and their skill at the disposition of the State, and to go wherever they are needed. In the spring of 1937 these two were only lately returned home and both seemed rather disgruntled at the change. Pichi, who was taken ill and had elaborate exorcisms performed over him, privately expressed considerable scepticism. Most disquieting of all, they refused to accept the marriages which had been arranged for them; when they wanted to get married, they said, they would choose their wives for themselves. In the face of their obstinacy their elders were powerless; but it was felt and said that this modern self-reliance would come to no good. It is possible that in a few years' time they, like their elders who underwent similar experiences, will settle down comfortably into their native society; at the moment both of them are rather seriously maladjusted.

Except for such State servants, and for the Mandal and those 600

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eir baggage and marching out, this was effected.* 175
"We then left, and Lassoo Kajee accompanied us and
ked us to send an escort with him to Mr. Eden at Temi, for
: was on his way there on the previous evening, and hearing
ing ran down again, and falling on the rocks hurt his leg
verely. Ascending the ridge towards our camp we saw Mr.
den and Cheboo Lama coming down the ridge behind us
om Temi, he having understood that I was encamped on
e river bank. I returned to him with Lassoo Kajee, and
e then went to the river bank and talked with some of the
eople on the opposite side, and it was arranged that those
ho wished might cross on rafts. Mr. Eden then returned to
emi and I to my camp."

To the above account it is only necessary to add that 648
endly relations have continued with Sikkim ever since, and
at the country, although completely independent, is now
e chief refuge of tired Calcutta residents in search of health.
ountaineers, mostly from Europe, are also visiting the
untry in ever-increasing numbers; and hardly a year now
sses without some hitherto virgin peak being climbed.
inchinjunga, however, has so far resisted every assault, and
seems likely that many years will pass before man is able to
ercome its most formidable defences.

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* "On leaving Namchi, the force was divided into three parties, the main
umn, under Captain Impey, proceeding direct towards the Teesta, and
o parties, under Colonel Gawler and Captain Urwin respectively, making
g detours to the left and right, with the view of all reuniting again at the
esta. Captain Impey's column surprised the Sikkimese camp at Temi;
y fled, leaving their clothes and weapons, and were pursued down
hin a few miles of the Teesta. From that time no further attempt at
position was made; the people were perfectly paralysed at the rapid
vements of the troops, whom they perceived to be advancing in several
ections at once, by forced marches, through dense forests, and over
thless mountains, traversing in one day distances which even the natives
these hills considered to be three fair marches."—*Extract from Mr. Eden's*
l report, No. 40, April 8th, 1861.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrow head but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, "Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.